

2019

## Moving Modalities: An Exploration on how Switching Modes of Reader, Writer and Reviewer can Enhance Academic Writing Pedagogy.

Roisin Donnelly

Claire McAvinia

Ita Kennelly

Follow this and additional works at: <https://arrow.tudublin.ie/ltcon>

 Part of the [Business Commons](#), and the [Education Commons](#)

---

This Conference Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Learning, Teaching & Technology Centre at ARROW@TU Dublin. It has been accepted for inclusion in Conference papers by an authorized administrator of ARROW@TU Dublin. For more information, please contact [yvonne.desmond@tudublin.ie](mailto:yvonne.desmond@tudublin.ie), [arrow.admin@tudublin.ie](mailto:arrow.admin@tudublin.ie), [brian.widdis@tudublin.ie](mailto:brian.widdis@tudublin.ie).



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 License](#)

# Moving modalities: An exploration on how demarcating the modes of reader, writer and reviewer can enhance academic writing pedagogy

Roisin Donnelly, Claire McAvinia and Ita Kennelly

## Abstract

For over a decade, the Academic Writing & Publishing (AWP) module has been delivered for academic staff and postgraduate students in the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), now part of the new Technological University Dublin. The module aims to support students to enhance their academic writing and to develop an academic paper to the standard of publication for a peer-reviewed journal of their choice. Module delivery comprises workshops and a range of supports and feedback mechanisms built in to give students opportunities to critically evaluate and develop their own work and to assist in the development of their peers' writing. In its most recent delivery, a clearer delineation of three modes of working was introduced to the AWP module. These modes, *Reader mode*, *Writer mode* and *Reviewer mode* provide an organising framework for the delivery of module. They support students to engage with academic writing from distinctive standpoints building emphasis on critical reading and reviewing skills as key parts of writer development.

This study sought to explore the value of this emphasis on the three modes of working to students on the module. It examined the practical use of the framework in terms of students' understanding of the writing process and the development of their competency as an academic writer. It also sought to establish if there had been any impact on their sense of professional writer identity and confidence. Findings...(data analysis currently underway but will be completed shortly to add to abstract).



*Moving modalities: An exploration of how switching modes of reader, writer and reviewer can enhance academic writing pedagogy*

Brighton, June 14<sup>th</sup> 2019



# We are



*Dr Roisin Donnelly*



*Dr Claire McAvinia*



*Dr Ita Kennelly*



- In January 2019 , 3 Institutes of Technology merged to form Ireland's first Technological University
- 28,000 students (level 6 to 10)

The Academic Writing & Publishing module  
has been running for approx. 10 years

We had an idea about different  
modes of working to support  
writing...

Our study is about whether our participants could  
see value in this approach and whether it helped  
their learning and writing...



# Today's Presentation

## The Module

- About the module, its context and participants
- Module components and features

## The Study

- Modalities
- Objectives and Methodology
- Participants' views
- Learning for our practice
- Emerging model?

# What it looks like in practice ■ ■ ■

## Welcome to the module!

This module provides support, writing strategies, and feedback to boost participants' confidence, competence and enjoyment of academic writing. It is designed to support your completion of a publication or other research project you are near to finishing, but it will also be useful to kick-start your academic writing, or help you overcome the challenges of juggling writing with a busy professional life.

The timetable covers key areas such as planning research writing, submitting publications, conducting peer review, revising texts, and enhancing your productivity and conference presentation delivery as an academic.

The module is delivered over two semesters because we believe writing a quality journal paper cannot be done in a hurry; it requires both patience and time. There is increasing pressure on academics to undertake research and to publish both in their own disciplines and in third level learning and teaching. In this module, there will be an opportunity to consider how our teaching, our learning/eLearning, professional practice and our students' learning can become the focus of some form of sustained inquiry.

Participants will hone their written and oral communications skills through writing practice and presentation. Research skills will be developed by preparing and presenting a research paper in a selected area of practice. Participants will learn how to successfully present and disseminate their work and the module will be beneficial for all who work in either further or higher education settings. We will examine the principles of academic writing and the skills of information literacy and focus on how to write and present a conference paper and a paper for publication in a peer reviewed journal.

There are two assessed components for this module: a journal paper and a conference presentation. This module is delivered through a blended approach comprising activity based classroom sessions and regular online activities. There is a strong emphasis on both group work and independent learning throughout the module.

*Confidence & Career*

*Getting Writing*

*Incremental & Developmental*

*Conference & Communication*

*2 X Assessments*

## Diversity of Disciplines

Architecture  
Strategic Management  
Engineering  
Supply Chain Management  
Social Sciences  
Geomatics  
Career Development  
Design  
Retail  
Chemistry  
Physics  
HR Management  
Visual Merchandising  
Electronics  
Business administration  
Computer Science  
Law  
Marketing  
Business  
Communications  
Writing Support  
Science  
Accounting  
Video Game Programming  
Biochemistry  
Academic English  
Optometry

- **'Long thin'** module running from October to April
- **Blended Approach** with individual and group activities to develop writing: Writer forum for journal paper plan, online journal club for reading, peer review of draft work in class and online
- **Academic Literacies approach** – diversity of disciplinary writing, promoting participants' knowledge-building
- **Formative Feedback** on plan, draft and final paper as well as on conference presentation
- Promoting participants to seek opportunities to **publish** and **present**



# How our teaching is informed by Literature



## Writing as:

- Text
- Process
- Social Practice

*In order to help academics write more productively and with more success, we need to understand the nature of academic writing and to design interventions that help academics to develop and achieve their writing goals (Moore, 2003)*

*writing is embedded in a tangle of cultural, historical practices that are both institutional and disciplinary*

■ Kamler and Thomson (2008)

*Writers – even new writers can facilitate each other's writing*  
Murray (2005)

Writing with power for Elbow (1998):  
*creativity and critical thinking and also sharing...*

*Writing is thinking*  
Becker (1986); Richardson (2005)

*When they see themselves as writers, they act like writers...*  
Fernsten & Reda (2011)



# The Study

# Research Curiosity

## MODES OF WORKING



### READER

Critical and  
purposeful reading...  
Building awareness,  
knowledge and  
connections



### WRITER

Getting the writing  
moving. Drafting.  
Writing is thinking...



### REVIEWER

Peer Reviewer of work  
Taking on viewpoint of  
editor  
Building self review  
skills

*What is the understanding and experience of academics of their professional identity as writers and the triad of modalities of support through the AWP module?*

## Research Question



- What was your motivation for taking the module?
- Is writing part of your role and do you consider yourself as an academic writer? Do you consider it as part of your professional identity?
- How would you rate your confidence as an academic writer before you took the module and have you experienced any changes to this?
- The module provided different viewpoints or modalities of reader, writer, reviewer. How useful was this approach for you? Are there any areas that you felt needed more time/exposure?
- Any “light bulb” moments useful for your writing practice during the module?...and more specifically the critical reading / writing activities / reviewing activities that you engaged with?
- Have you seen any benefits to your writing practice? / If so, what activities have supported this?
- What are your thoughts on the role of feedback on the module on the development of academic practice/academic writer identity?



## Study Participants



- 1) PhD student, male
- 2) Lecturer, male
- 3) Programme manager, female
- 4) Lecturer, female
- 5) Early career lecturer, male
- 6) PhD student, female

# Research Approach



- Qualitative study
- Interviews undertaken by all 3 researchers
- Interviews recorded and transcribed
- Thematic analysis searching for findings relating to **Reader, Writer** and **Reviewer** modes
- Other findings emerged about writing in higher education



# Findings

## Themes Emerging

### Reader Mode



Reading as a Structured, Organised Activity	Online Journal Club	Confidence
<p>A number of participants highlighted the tools that were provided on the module to support more organised, systematic and critical reading as useful and will adopt this new approach:</p> <p><b>Critical synopsis/rubric approach</b> to reading texts will be internalized going forward</p> <p>Reading articles to gain deeper understanding <b>of how to structure/layout</b> a paper and also to get <b>techniques</b> around literature reviews, <b>and ideas on being methodical about research</b> as well as <b>writing</b></p> <p>Knowing what <b>systematic</b> means as an approach to reading</p>	<p>Mixed response to the effectiveness of the online journal club.</p> <p>Participants saw the <b>potential of collaborative, social reading</b></p> <p>Found the journal club very useful to bring to others to use in their own teaching and one participant mentioned how it will help their supervision practice</p> <p>Issues arose around a <b>mismatch</b> of people in groups</p>	<p>Building knowledge about literature reviews increased writer confidence and helped making and arguing points</p>
<p>"The sheet with the summary of what you've read. I think that that was super helpful, and, you know kind of wish I had been doing that for a long time"</p>	<p><i>"it wasn't lack of interest, but maybe there wasn't a just a great group fit maybe"</i></p>	<p>"The module helped develop my critical reading skills and this helped confidence and decision-making"</p>



## Themes Emerging

(1)

### Writer Mode



Developing existing writing practices through the module	Motivations to write	Feedback supporting Writing
<p>Being more methodical and systematic</p> <p>More efficient reading and writing / Being more rigorous adds to enjoyment of writing</p> <p>Using mind maps to help start writing</p> <p>Refining style</p> <p>Collaborating helps</p> <p>Feedback helps</p> <p>Crystallizing ideas</p> <p>Supported process for writing</p> <p>Module helps you to silence the inner critic (e.g. writing to task deadlines)</p>	<p>Publishing from PhD and <b>doing something with the data</b></p> <p>Need to know how <b>to teach students</b> to write</p> <p>Writing is <b>part of the life</b> of an academic</p> <p><b>Career development</b> and link to publishing</p> <p>Beginning with conference experiences and want to <b>progress to papers</b></p> <p><b>Find it difficult</b></p>	<p>Submitting drafts for <b>feedback and smaller tasks</b> helpful</p> <p>Getting <b>feedback is a motivator</b> to write</p> <p>Feedback <b>helps confidence</b></p>
<p>"Yeah like I think definitely now, say for the draft, OK because the deadline was there and I couldn't put it off any longer, time was against me, I had to like just kinds ship the kids off for a weekend so I could just sit down and write, I had to just kind of, cos I'm, a huge critic goes on my head you know, cos I'm a bit of a perfectionist, so literally, there was a time when I'd have to delete every sentence, start changing the words to find a better word and certainly, I was like, just right, just get it down, it's not perfect, it's definitely not..."</p>	<p>"just thrash it out there, get it done, get it done, get it done well, in time, and out there before it becomes, like outdated."</p> <p>"publishing is part of my daily life. Either for conferences or journals. Improving this ability will allow me to have higher chances of acceptance"</p> <p>"so I have lots of papers that I've presented, competitive papers and that kind of thing but not an article."</p>	<p>"So, I'm kind of I'm at this stage where I just got the feedback from ** and it was brilliant feedback, like, she put so much effort into it, like it was clear to me that she put a lot of time and effort into this document. And I kind of went oh God this means I have to do loads more work, you know, but, you know, the fact that she put so much into it was, you know, gave me a bit of positivity, because I said, Well, look at the support that she's giving you. So, just get on with it and get it done..."</p> <p>"if I have nothing, then there's nothing to feed back on. So I just kind of sat down and did it..."</p>

## Themes Emerging

(2)

## Writer Mode



Writing and Community	Identity as a Writer	Confidence
<p>Value of sharing practices</p> <p>Developing writing through collaboration</p> <p>Knowing other people struggle with it</p> <p>Having people interested</p> <p>Commitment to it as a process</p>	<p><b>Mixed responses from participants on whether they identify as a writer -</b></p> <p>Not a writer at all / A researcher rather than a writer / writer versus teacher / Writing is part of the life of an academic e</p> <p>Needing to know how to teach students to write</p> <p>Legitimacy - am I allowed to write about topic x?</p>	<p>Lacking confidence in writing / Procrastination and inner critic / Dread of rejection</p> <p><b>Developing confidence through this module</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- knowing that other people find writing challenging</li> <li>- People believing in your topic builds confidence</li> <li>- Productivity increases confidence</li> <li>- Feedback in the module built confidence</li> <li>- Achieving a breakthrough</li> <li>- Starting writing to overcome fear - having something to work from</li> </ul>
<p>"I love listening to what other people are doing..."</p> <p>"she sent a nice (I didn't bring it), an article on how to get published or something, you know, so she made the effort and I set up a little Whatsapp group for us, that was nothing, you know, so I kind of said I'll make the, take the initiative and make the effort, but it just didn't come about."</p>	<p>"But I always wanted to be an educator, and writing for me was always part and parcel, you know you have to be a writer, you have to be a good academic writer, if you want to be an academic!"</p> <p>"I would have thought about disciplines a lot. And whether you have the qualifications, to write about particular topics, what constitutes, you know, your legitimacy."</p>	<p>"so I'm definitely a more confident academic writer now, I know about publications, about guidelines about how, a better route for reviewing other publications, you know, so I absolutely... Em starting from a pretty low base granted, I... my confidence has improved definitely as a result of the module"</p> <p>"So, yeah, but in terms of confidence, certainly like now, like say *** and *** really liked the subject matter of what I was writing and they liked the kind of, you know, the format and everything, and you know who else would ever say that? You know I literally, if I was to sit down and write that myself, where do I go to ask anyone?"</p>



Themes Emerging

Reviewer Mode

Reviewer Mode as Editorial View	Reviewer Mode as Peer Review	Reviewer Mode as Self Review	Other
Useful to switch into the <b>perspective of editors</b> and to consider what they are looking for (and not) as a way to help writing and continuous self-appraisal in the drafting process.	<p><b>Peer Review had mixed reviews</b></p> <p><b>Benefits included:</b> <b>community, learning</b> from others and about other disciplines. Giving <b>feedback</b> a challenge but worthwhile. Receiving feedback beneficial</p> <p><b>Disadvantages:</b> matching across disciplines an issue - <b>no commonality or connection.</b> <b>Time too limited</b> to get full benefit</p>	Participants saw benefits of switching to reviewer mode(s) to help the <b>appraisal of their own work</b>	A couple of participants spoke about the value of the peer review and group reading processes to their teaching and spoke about modelling these practices in their own teaching.
"Maybe when listening about mistakes that editors find in papers and reasons for rejection...I tend to not look at my work from the reviewer and reader points of view, and it helped me to open my eyes with that."	<p>"somebody who's just put a bit of considered thought, has actually kind of looked at what you've written, to get that bouncing back, those ideas, would just give you like another train of thought that'll enhance the document even further."</p> <p>"Well, even if it's negative it still gives you starting point!"</p> <p>"For me, it was actually, the benefit was working on how I provide you know, positive critical feedback because, it's very easy when you're doing a blind review to be very critical and, you know, they'll never know who you are. But I have to go and speak to this person next week!"</p>	<p>"some of the content, which I think is very good, is to ask you to take a step back and say, you know, you might think you're a good writer, but maybe that your readers don't think you're so good... And yes, perhaps I am guilty of being a little bit too wordy sometimes, and things like that. So to give me the opportunity to review my style and approach to writing, writing generally, and academically writing, of course, and with a more kind of a different perspective and more reflective."</p> <p>"you can't just think of yourself as a writer, you must try and move your perspective, and that reflective thought around different audiences and peers, and all of that was very relevant and very useful."</p>	

## OTHER FINDINGS

**Time issues for writing**...competing demands but also the time involved in writing for publication

**Pressures to Publish** – many participants spoke about feeling the need rather than desire to write

# Learning for our Practice

## READER

- Reading is established as a key aspect of the module. Continue to encourage and support critical reading.
- Create a pack of tools to enhance critical reading?
- Further development of online journal club – new objectives to create more discussion about reading and writing? Further consideration of matching participants and facilitating meetings?

## WRITER

- Feedback very important and has a role in motivation to write and to continue to write. There is still a reliance on tutor feedback. Is there a way to establish self-review more formally as a process before draft submission to tutors?
- Developing opportunities for social practice and offering optional writing clinics/spaces to bring group together?

## REVIEWER

- Peer review works really well to develop reader and reviewers' perspectives but some more thought to matching is needed across disciplines or even to look at similar research approaches as a basis for matching people...looking for connection and commonality.

Develop clearer delineation of modalities in the structure and content of module. Embed within class discussions to help students consider the different perspectives.

## Overall Actions...

Ask participants to consider switching modes as part of their writing practice. This is about building in self-review, reading others' works in practical ways to inform their own.

Emerging  
Model :  
Switching  
Modes is  
useful ■ ■ ■

